

## The Other Side of Retirement

Presented by: Liz Robinson, Director, Employee Assistance Program

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470 Capitol Avenue, Conference Room A/B

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- Liz Robinson introduced herself and provided a brief summary of the history of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). The EAP has developed a much broader scope since it was first introduced as a program of anonymity exclusively for employees suffering substance addiction.
- Liz initiated the discussion around the “other side of retirement” by stating that there is more than just financial planning to retirement but also a social side.
- Liz discussed the difference between *change* and *transition*; change being an external event (“today I got married”, “today I retired”, whereas transition is fluid, i.e., the internal process one goes through to adjust to the change).
- Liz described William Bridges’ transition model which involves a three-phase process as described below. (Bridges authored the book “Managing Transitions” – see below resources for more information).

- Phase 1)** Endings
  - Disengagement
  - Disidentification
  - Disenchantment
  - Disorientation
- Phase 2)** Neutral Zone
  - This is where psychological realignments take place
- Phase 3)** New Beginnings
  - Where a new identity develops (a new sense of purpose)

### **Resources:**

<http://www.strategies-for-managing-change.com/william-bridges.html>

<http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/bridges-transition-model.htm>

- Liz described retirement as a “major event” (similar to getting married, changing jobs, or relocating) and gave an opportunity to the group to discuss what it means to them to “retire”.
- Liz spoke to the importance of being in control of the decision to retire and discussed the emotions/components around leaving the workplace (how to wind down from the workplace and gear up for the new chapter). The group was encouraged to take an inventory of such things as their skills, health, friends, family, marital status, interests, and dreams. The group used handouts to help them

determine (enclosed) what hobbies and activities *currently* interest them and which of those they hope to do more of (or learn) during retirement.

- Liz discussed the changes associated with retirement, emphasizing the importance of keeping a structured schedule. Changes include:
  - Structure
  - Social Network
  - Financial Status
  - Identity/Meaning
  - Future
  - Intellectual Challenge
  
- Liz discussed how major life changes produces stress – and that it is important for one to emotionally prepare for retirement and have a strong support network in place to provide strength during times of heavy stress.
  
- Liz introduced a discussion around stress management as triggered by the impact of such changes, i.e., change in identity, change in routine, etc., and the importance of practicing positive self-care (exercise, sleep, nutrition). Liz encouraged the group to identify the warning signs of stress and to seek help as needed.
  
- Liz also spoke about coping with change, and how change involves loss and creates loss. She spoke about how coping with change may require skills the some have to develop and spoke of the resources available through the EAP that can help (even after you retire).